

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMCONSUL MILAN

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AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL GENOA

AMCONSUL PALERMO

AMCONSUL TRIESTE

AMCONSUL TURIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT, UR, PO

SUBJECT: DC RESISTENCE TO "OPENING" NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO PCI;
CONTINUED POLEMICS OVER DEMARTINO-BERLINGUER STATEMENT
ON PORTUGAL

REF: ROME 11752: ROME 11735

SUMMARY: DESPITE THE AUGUST DOLDRUMS, MORE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC)
VOICES ARE BEING RAISED AGAINST A POSSIBLE ATTEMPT BY THE PSI IN THE
FALL TO FORCE ITS CENTER-LEFT PARTNERS TO ASSOCIATE THE COMMUNISTS
(PCI) TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE, POLEMICS OVER THE
BERLINGUER-DEMARTINO COMMUNIQUE CONTINUE AT A HIGH PITCH. CHARGES
OF "NEO-FRONTISM" (ALLIANCE WITH PCI) AGAINST THE SOCIALISTS ARE
BEING PRESSED MOST SHARPLY BY THE REPUBLICANS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
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AMONG THE CENTER-LEFT PARTIES. END SUMMARY

1. DC LEFT WING LEADER DONAT CATTIN'S STRONG OBJECTION (REFTEL) TO THE TRANSFER TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE "OPEN" (TO PCI) CENTER-LEFT COMPROMISE REACHED IN LOMBARDY AND ELSEWHERE, HAS TWICE BEEN FULLY SUPPORTED BY INTERIOR MINISTER GUI. IN HIS LATEST PRONOUNCEMENT, AN INTERVIEW IN ESPRESSO, GUI ADDS THAT THE LOCAL JUNTA ARE IN CHAOS, AND WARNS THAT THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS NO LONGER A POLITICAL BASE SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO CONFRONT THE "SOCIAL PRESSURES" EXPECTED IN THE FALL.

2. MEANWHILE DOROTEO FACTION NOTABLE RUFFINI HAS ALSO WEIGHED IN AGAINST THE SOCIALIST PROPOSAL AND THE SITUATION IN THE LOCAL JUNTAS. HE JOINED WITH GUI AND DONAT CATTIN IN ENCOURAGING DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI TO BRING CLARITY INTO THE DC POSITION, A REQUEST ZACCAGNINI SATISFIED ONLY PARTIALLY IN HIS MEMORIAL EDITORIAL TO DEGASPERI, AUGUST 19. ZACCAGNINI EMPHASIZED DEGASPERI'S VIEW THAT A CLEAR LINE MUST BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

3. IN REBUTTAL TO CHARGES OF FALLING BACK INTO "FRONTISM" (ALLIANCE WITH THE PCI) AND OF COMPROMISING PSI SUPPORT FOR SOARES VIS-A-VIS CUNHAL, THE SOCIALISTS ARGUE THAT THE BERLINGUER-DEMARTINO JOINT STATEMENT ON PORTUGAL FULLY INCORPORATES SOARES' PLATFORM, AND THAT THE PCI SUBSCRIBED TO THE PSI POSITION RATHER THAN THE CONTRARY. THEY ALSO CITE THE OVERRIDING NEED TO FORESTALL ANTI-DEMOCRATIC REACTION IN PORTUGAL. (THESE ARGUMENTS WERE PRESENTED AUTHORITATIVELY BY SECRETARY DEMARTINO IN A FRONT PAGE INTERVIEW IN LA STAMPA.)

4. CRITICS COUNTER BY ARGUING THAT THE DECLARATION COMES TOO LATE TO JUSTIFY THIS DEFENSE. HAD IT COME WHEN THE MILITARY IN PORTUGAL WITH SUPPORT FROM CUNHAL WAS CLOSING DOWN SOARES' NEWSPAPER, ETC., IT WOULD INDEED HAVE BEEN CREDIBLE. COMING NOW WHEN CUNHAL'S STRATEGY HAS COLLAPSED, AND HE SEEKS AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PSP TO SURVIVE (WHICH SOARES HAS REJECTED), THE DECLARATION ONLY SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE PCP IN PORTUGAL AND THE PCI IN ITALY. IT CAN ONLY BE READ THEREFORE AS A RETURN TO "FRONTISM."

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5. SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST POLEMICISTS HAVE SMUGLY DISMISSED SOCIAL DEMOCRAT AND CONSERVATIVE CRITICISM AS KNEE JERK REACTIONS LACKING IN CREDIBILITY. HOWEVER, THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY PERTURBED AND SURPRISED BY THE STRONG REACTION OF THE PRI, ESPECIALLY PARTY SECRETARY BIASINI'S FLAT STATEMENT THAT THE COMMUNIQUE WAS "INSPIRED BY FRONTISM."

6. COMMENT: IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT HOW THE DC INTENDS TO COUNTER SOCIALIST PRESSURES TO BRING THE PCI INTO GOVERNMENT WITHOUT OPTING FOR A CRISIS. ZACCAGNINI IS EVIDENTLY BIDDING HIS TIME AND NOT LIKELY TO CALL A DIRECTORATE MEETING UNTIL HE HAS THE PROPOSALS OF THE THREE MAN COMMITTEE HE APPOINTED IN HAND (ROME 11430). THE FRACTURED DOROTEO FACTION (FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR HAS CONFIRMED HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM IT) IS REPORTEDLY PLANNING A STRATEGY MEETING IN MID-SEPTEMBER, AND IT NOW LOOKS LIKE DC WILL REMAIN IN THE DOLDRUMS AT LEAST UNTIL LATTER PART OF SEPT-EMBER. VOLPE

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